

REMARKS

This Amendment, filed in reply to the Office Action dated September 15, 2006, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1-27 remain pending. Claims 1-21 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USPN 5,301,107 to Shimura. Claims 22-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimura. Claim 24 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimura in view of Andrews (U.S.P. 4,449,195). Claim 25 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimura in view of Sones (U.S.P. 4,792,900). Claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimura in view of Sones and Andrews. Claim 27 has alternatively been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimura and Sones.

The Examiner maintains the same basis of rejections of the prior pending claims and offers rebuttals in reply to previously submitted arguments. To expedite prosecution of this case, Applicant amends claims 6, 13, and 26 in independent form, cancels claims 1, 5, 7, 10 and 25 without prejudice and disclaimer and rewrites the dependencies of the remaining claims as necessary. The modifications should be entered because the recitations in the independent claims do not raise new issues in need of further search or consideration due to their prior pendency.

With regard to independent claim 6, this claim describes that the first and second subtraction are performed in a common energy subtraction means. The Examiner contends that

Shimura teaches this feature, with reference to cols. 14 and 15. The cited portion of Shimura merely describes that first image signal S01 and second image signal S02 are stored to an internal memory of the computer 30. There is no discussion of a common subtraction processing means to obtain the soft tissue image 47 and the bone image 43. In fact, Shimura specifically contemplates use of different weighting coefficients, and thus different subtraction operations, to obtain the images 47, 43. See col. 15, equations 1 and 2. Therefore, Applicant submit that Shimura specifically does not include a common energy subtraction processing means.

Claim 13 is patentable based on analogous recitations.

With regard to claims 24 and 26, these claims describe instruction means receiving instructions from a user regarding the second energy subtraction processing. The Examiner concedes that Shimura (and the combination of Shimura and Sones) does not teach this feature and cites Andrews to make up for this deficiency. In this regard, the Examiner refers to col. 3, lines 22-33 and col. 5, lines 13-48. The cited portions of Andrews do not support the rejection. Col. 3 of Andrews relates to user setting of different energy levels of radiation imaging. This has no bearing on a second subtraction process. Col. 5 of Andrews relates to forming two difference images. The first difference image includes a body image without an injected contrast, and the second difference image includes a body image with an injected contrast. To the extent that first and second subtraction may be performed, the subtractions are performed on distinctly different sets of image data in the first and second difference processes. In particular, one set of images without the injected contrast and a second set of images with the injected contrast. In contradistinction, Applicant's claims relate to two subtraction processes from a common set of

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No. 10/026,433

Attorney Docket No. Q66574

signals. Therefore, any purported user input of Andrews fails to teach the features of claims 24 and 26.

The remaining claims are patentable based on their rewritten dependencies.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.


Respectfully submitted,

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